

## On the Implications of Foucault's *Security, Territory, Population* Lectures for the Analysis and Theorisation of Security in International Relations

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The publication of the first translation of Michel Foucault's lecture series, *Security, Territory, Population*, given at the Collège de France in 1978 is of great significance for the study and theorisation of security in International Relations. Foucault's influence on the development of debates surrounding the politics of security in International Relations and beyond over the last three decades would be difficult to understate. The translation and publication of these lectures, given the specificity of their focus on security is therefore an important moment in the development of Foucauldian approaches to the politics of security and international politics as a whole. They provide us with an opportunity to reflect on the utility of Foucault's works as a resource for the political critique of contemporary regimes of security as well as for the pursuit of alternatives to prevailing political conditions.

But what are those regimes and what precisely are those conditions? The brilliance of these lectures lies in tandem with much of Foucault's late works, in their detailing of the origins and development of specifically liberal regimes of governance. Liberalism is, as I have explored in a recently published book with Michael Dillon, *The Liberal Way of War*, a diverse tradition of governance but it is defined by a political strategy which Foucault pinpoints in these lectures and which is a focus for much of his later works. Liberal regimes, as he shows us in illuminating detail, are different from other formations of power in that they seek security by promoting the life of populations in contrast with the traditional preoccupations of sovereignty with negating life and threatening it with death. In spite of the different ways in which biopower has been formulated and exercised during the modern era, it is in the liberal tradition that we find these linkages between power, life, and security most vividly drawn. The investment of liberal regimes in this strategy in turn has created a distinctive political condition; a condition wherein the forms of expression that life assumes becomes of profound interest and importance to the regimes that seek to promote it. A condition in which the most minimal and banal expressions of life become objects of scientific investigation and knowledge, of control and regulation, and crucially sometimes, objects of strategic, and indeed violent interventions – all paradoxically on behalf of life's welfare. Foucault saw, probably more clearly than anyone, and documented more carefully, the perverse implications and paradoxes of this political strategy for the possibilities of life under liberal conditions. These lectures are best understood in this context of the development of the conditions for a political critique of liberalism which his late work allow for.

Today, liberalism enjoys a global power far greater than achieved in Foucault's own era; the late period of the Cold War. Then, of course, the influence of liberalism was contingent on the existence of a relatively limited coalition of Western states against which other powerful and differently constituted states and actors, both inside and outside the West, could be distinguished. Radical political critique was defined largely by a preoccupation with

resistance to the practices and institutions of 'the State.' Foucault's own work does of course partake in such a critique of state institutions and practices, but the value of these lectures and his later works as a whole rests in its potential for a critique of the specifically liberal forms of governance through which the modern institution of state sovereignty has been called into question and gradually diminished in favour of more insidious, and yet global, forms of rule. Today, liberal regimes of governance are no longer dependent on the institutions of state sovereignty to the extent they were in previous modern eras. Not just states, but a vast range of international actors, including significantly, transnational political institutions, regional military alliances, global economic organisations, and numerous non-governmental agencies and movements, are proponents and propagators of the truth claims on which the influence of liberalism thrives. Indeed this is precisely why it is necessary to refer to liberal regimes rather than merely states or other entities. The concept of the 'regime' captures the relative subordination of different actors, institutions, and power holders to specific forms of principle and shared understandings of desirable and acceptable forms of social organisation. Regimes are liberal in so far as they aspire to achieve forms of social organisation which involve the minimum reliance on 'rule' and the use of force and legislation as possible. This is not to argue that they aspire to diminish their capacities for governance. It is to argue, of course that liberal regimes aspire to govern by strategising life from the inside out rather than by applying strategies of rule from the outside in. Indeed, at the risk of simplification, this is probably Foucault's chief insight into the specificity of liberalism as a discourse on governance.

The problems created and the questions posed by liberalism today are, however, much greater than they were in Foucault's own time. Indeed, they are like the extension of the discourse, of an increasingly global character. The globality of virtually all political struggles today is an outcome of this extensive growth in influence and power of liberalism. The insurgencies and popular rebellions in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially, cannot be understood other than in the context of the historical development of this hegemonic function; they being a direct expression of the fear and loathing it generates in and among cultures and societies which do not recognise its truth claims, and which actively seek to refuse it in defence of alternative ways of living.

Yet, reading these lectures in ways that help us to make sense of and seek answers to the global reach of liberalism in the contemporary era requires some work on the part of the reader. Foucault's attention to the international dimension of power politics was somewhat limited. It is often remarked that in his completed works, he said little about the character of international politics as such. The final three lectures of this series will go some way to refuting that particular objection. For here we encounter a Foucault deeply interested in the origins and development specifically of the modern international system of states; most especially in the function of the then new and distinct forms of *raison d'Etat* which made that system work. The subsequent lecture series from 1979, *Birth of Biopolitics*, also demonstrates the depth of Foucault's interest in the international as a distinct sphere of knowledge and practices. Still, however, it is striking, in reading both these sets of lectures, how seemingly oblivious Foucault was to the function of the international as a distinct sphere for the exercise and growth of the liberal arts of government which he was otherwise so interested in tracking. Foucault was meticulous in tracing the development of liberalism as an art of

government within the domain of the modern state. But in being so he almost completely neglects the historical development of liberal internationalism as a distinct body of knowledge and practice concerned with the organisation of relations between states, and therefore with the contemporary denigrations of the principle of state sovereignty that it necessarily leads to. Indeed Foucault's own analysis of modern political reason developed in these lectures is based upon a fairly conventional distinction between the internal and external sovereignty of the modern state.

Perhaps given his own spatio-temporal limitations, we ought not to judge Foucault too harshly for this neglect. Indeed I think, there are signs he understood the origins of and foresaw the extent of the processes of transformation which the growth in power of liberalism would lead to. Intuitively, also, he understood I think, and foresaw, the new types of security problems and political issues that the liberalization of international relations would entail. For in tracing the emergence and development of the political rationality of liberalism within the state, he likewise traces its production of a distinctly liberal account of security. In analysing the development of liberal arts of government he shows how the problem of what security is and how to achieve it, was gradually reconceived over time, under the duress of liberal regimes' investment in life. From the formative interest of modern sovereignty in securing the territorial boundaries of the state we are led to the more acutely liberal problematic of how to secure the life properties and processes of populations. At its point of origin, this liberal problematisation of life as the referent object of security is shown to have emerged as little more than a handmaiden of modern sovereignty; a body of knowledge and a set of practices through which the life properties and processes of populations became gradually amenable to control and regulation in service of the strength of the state. The early modern state, upon Foucault's account, sought to secure the life of its populations in order to improve its competitive positioning within the domain of inter-state relations. Securing the life of populations meant securing regimes from the threat of sedition. A reduced threat of sedition equalled a more stable state better able to comport itself in its international relations. More stable states and more calculable modes of comportment between states equalled a more harmonious international system of states, and so on. Thus Foucault demonstrates how the liberal security project emerged in a strategic relation of subservience to the forms of *raison d'Etat* that were so constitutive of the security discourses of modern sovereignty.

In the current context of global politics that strategic relation of subordination of liberalism to sovereignty has been dramatically reconfigured. The clearest indication of this shift can be identified in the domain of security discourse and practice itself. The liberalisation of international relations has produced a shift in the ways how security problems are conceived not just within states domestically but internationally. To the extent that the very functions of the sovereign powers of states, including the most powerful of Western states, are increasingly subject to liberal principles and rules. Since the Cold War we have witnessed a veritable explosion in the discourses of, for example, 'human security' internationally; to the extent that states only make recourse to concepts of national interest in legitimisation of force where and when they can align those interests with that of 'the species as a whole'. The triumph of this liberal humanitarian discourse internationally announces if not the death then at least the subordination of traditional institutions of state sovereignty to governance

via liberal international institutions and practices amid an exponential growth in liberal humanitarian discourse. In this context we are witnessing, I think, a phenomenon which bears distinct continuities with the then nascent forms of liberal security apparatuses which Foucault documents so assiduously within the context of domestic social relations within early modern states. It is in this sense that contemporary liberal regimes of governance bear witness not just to continuities with Foucault's framework of analysis but to its reversal. The use of war over the last twenty years has undergone a transformation of epic proportions, every bit as epochal as the change that it underwent under duress of the new forms of *raison d'Etat* which framed the organisation of the early modern international system. Hence we are witnessing a reversal in the order of relations between liberal regimes and state sovereignty. War is only viable today, indeed can only legitimately be waged, where and when it can be demonstrated to serve the security of the liberal institutions and agencies to which formerly sovereign states now find themselves suborned.

The security discourses of the global liberal order reproduce so many of the tropes and signatures of the early modern liberal state which Foucault analyses in these lectures. He demonstrates how the liberal state of the early modern era, on account of its problematisation of life as the referent object of security, invented entire new species of enmity and threats. Once the referent object of security became the life of the population so the circulatory infrastructures on which the life properties and processes of the populations of states were said to rely became identified as sites of insecurity and threat. So, new domains and practices of regulation concerned with the governance of roads and highways, the suppression of vagrancy, and so on, came into existence. The development of the contemporary global liberal order is generative of new and yet very comparable forms of security problems. An excellent example of this is the current discourse surrounding so-called 'rogue states', the constitutions of which are represented as hostile to the smooth functioning of the circulatory infrastructures of global liberal order. Indeed the extension of this discourse of the rogue and of roguery to the international suggests, as Jacques Derrida has also demonstrated, continuities with liberal regimes of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In a brilliant analysis which I think in many ways can be read as a supplement to Foucault's, delivered not long before his death, Derrida demonstrated the genealogical intertwinements of the word 'rogue' and its equivalents in French, 'voyou' and 'roué', with concepts of humanity and animality, and its roles in the development of liberal practices of security and order. In English the word 'rogue' designates deviance in both human and non-human life forms. Derrida demonstrates this by quoting from an article in which 'a rogue is defined as a creature that is born different...incapable of mingling with the herd, which keeps itself to itself, and can attack at any time, without warning'. Crucially, this concept of the rogue and of roguery derived from early modern theories of biology. In reference to the vegetable kingdom, Charles Darwin in *Origin of Species* referred to 'roguing' as the practice by which nurserymen would weed out plants that deviated from the proper standard of plants in seed-beds, literally pulling-up what they called the 'rogues'. He then adapted the concept of roguing to describe the process by which natural selection functions throughout living systems to maintain order among species. In French, Derrida argues, the word has a more human resonance, for 'the word *voyou* has an essential relation with the *voie*, the way, with the urban roadways (*voirie*), the roadways of the city or the *polis*, and thus with the

street (*rue*), the waywardness (*dévolement*) of the voyou consisting in making ill use of the street, in corrupting the street or loitering in the streets, in “roaming the streets”

Politically, Derrida shows, the representatives of liberal order have consistently tried ‘to present as voyous all rebels, agitators, and insurgents, indeed all revolutionaries, regardless of whether they come from bad neighbourhoods, or from the suburbs’. Thus, the rogue is marked by its inhumanity, aggression, non-conformity, and disorder, while always being ‘a part of mankind, always human, of our kind.’

The concept of the ‘rogue state’ has, during the post-Cold War era, become a regularly deployed reference for regimes said to threaten the boundaries of global liberal order. This proliferation of the discourse of roguery from the biological to the social to the international tells us a lot about the increasing complexities of liberal security practices as well as their continuities with the early modern era. It tells us also a lot about the power of their biological imaginaries upon the conceptions of fear and danger which have motivated the development of the security practices of liberal regimes historically, and which are proving definitive of their strategic response to the new threats posed by terrorism.

In their responses to terrorism, liberal regimes of the present have made the protection of global architectures of circulation and infrastructure a strategic priority. The conduct of the Global War on Terror has been defined in particular by the development of strategies for the protection of ‘critical infrastructure’. In the US, for example, George W. Bush has provided a series of presidential directives in response to the attacks of September 11 for the development of what is termed a *National Infrastructure Protection Plan*. The response to the directive is expressed in *The National Plan for Research and Development in Support of Critical Infrastructure Protection* published by the US Department of Homeland Security in 2004. In Europe, the European Union is pursuing what it terms a *European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection* ‘to enhance European prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks involving critical infrastructures’. The United Nations is seeking meanwhile to identify the critical infrastructure needs of member states globally, as well as continuing to ‘explore ways to facilitate the dissemination of best practices’ with regard to critical infrastructure protection.

Intriguingly, the concept of the ‘rogue’ is regularly used to describe the various forms of threat posed to critical infrastructure in the social jurisdictions of liberal regimes. Not only rogue states, but non-state ‘rogue actors’ and even pre-individual ‘rogue behaviours’ are increasingly singled out as the sources of insecurity for a global liberal order the welfare of which is conceived in circulatory and infrastructural terms. In the nineteenth century the protection of liberal order from the threats posed by ‘rogues’ involved securing life, as Derrida describes, on ‘the street, in a city, in the urbanity and good conduct of urban life’. In the twenty-first century the ‘paths of circulation’ on which rogues are feared to roam are that much more complex and require that much more insidious methods of protection. The evaluation of threats is said to require ‘detailed analysis in order to detect patterns and anomalies, understanding and modelling of human behaviour, and translation of these sources into threat information’. It is likewise said to require the development of new technologies able to provide ‘analysis of deceptive behaviours, cognitive capabilities, the use

of everyday heuristics' and 'the systematic analysis of what people do and where lapses do – and do not – occur'. It requires not just the surveillance and control of the social body as a whole, or of the movements and dispositions of individuals, but rather, techniques which target and seize control of life beneath the molecular thresholds of its biological functioning and existence.

While it is a fact that the biological imaginaries of liberal regimes have played a significant role in constituting the types of threat that they face, it is also a fact that the major adversaries of liberal regimes today base their strategies on the deliberate targeting of their circulatory capacities and 'critical infrastructures'. Groups such as Al-Qaeda are regarded as significant threats precisely because they deliberately target the 'critical infrastructures' which enable the liberality of these regimes rather than simply the human beings which inhabit them. Indeed, key intelligence sources, such as the FBI, report that Al-Qaeda are making the targeting of critical infrastructures their tactical priority. In Iraq, the insurgency is defined by similar methods involving the targeting of key infrastructure projects.

These strategies of protection, implemented by liberal regimes to secure themselves from terrorism, resemble acutely those with which liberal states of the early modern era sought to secure themselves from the threat of sedition. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the rationale was that the prevention of sedition required the promotion of internal trade and the general improvement of circulation among the domestic population. As the political influence of liberalism developed from the late eighteenth century onwards, so the task of identifying, strengthening, and securing the hidden infrastructures of societies became an increasingly prevalent goal and practice among governments. This understanding of the sources of security was fast politicised in the development not just of liberal political and philosophical thought, but in the development of the new governmental practices with which states would seek to enhance the resilience of the infrastructures of relations which would become the benchmarks of both their geo- and bio-political power. Government became the art and technique by which life would be tactically distributed and circulated in the 'network of relations' comprising the infrastructures of liberalising societies.

The liberal conception of society as an organism comprising networks and infrastructures of relations gathered apace throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, culminating in the prevailing conception of a networked world society held together and empowered economically, social, politically, and militarily by the density of its critical infrastructures. Likewise the principle that the regimes which govern such societies are vulnerable on account of their reliance on the vitality of those networked infrastructures, the principle governing Al-Qaeda's strategy, developed simultaneously within liberal regimes themselves. This was evident not least in the development of the practice of interstate warfare. The increasing investment in the strategic value of airpower in the UK, the US, and France during the twentieth century worked on the assumption that enemies could be defeated by inflicting critical damage on the infrastructures on which their security depended. Today we see the same logic being applied not just within the domain of liberal regimes themselves, but in the violent intervention and enforced reconstruction of illiberal states and societies. The solution to Terror is presumed to lie in the destruction of illiberal regimes, in the

regeneration of their socio-economic infrastructures of circulation, with a view to reinserting them into the networks of exchange and flows which constitute the global liberal polity.

This is especially true of the strategies which are currently and errantly being applied to the so-called rogue states of Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO, for example, once a military alliance to protect Western European states from the geopolitical threat of the former Soviet Union, is currently engaged in a strategy which stands and falls on their ability to convince Afghanis to give up their reliance on poppy seed for an economy centred on the production of grain. The irony of this will not be lost on the reader of *Security, Territory, Population*. For such military strategies of the liberal present depend on precisely the same assumption that classical liberal strategies against sedition depended in the historical eras which Foucault analysed. That is the assumption that historically constituted peoples can be politically suborned and transformed into the utile stuff of population in accordance with the needs and interests of governmental regimes seeking security from those selfsame peoples.

The continued development and application of technologies and techniques for infrastructure protection within liberal regimes reduces our lives within established regimes of liberal governance to a similarly logistical calculus of evaluation. In engineering the means with which to secure the infrastructures on which liberal regimes depend against the 'deceptions', 'rogues' and 'insider threats' aimed at it, human life is reduced to what I call in my book *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror*, 'logistical life'. Indeed, under conditions of liberal governance, each and every human individual is at risk of subjection to the new techniques and technologies of control and surveillance being developed in the name of critical infrastructure protection. 'Anyone can be' the US National Plan for Critical Infrastructure Protection informs its readership, 'presumed to be a candidate for insider threat'. And indeed everyone is the candidate of this form of threat. Research and development in response to the fear of 'deceptions', 'rogues' and 'insider threats' is aimed at the creation of what is called a 'Common Operating Picture for Critical Infrastructure' or 'COP' for short, in order to 'sense rogue behaviour' not simply in pre-identified sources of threats but in order to be able to 'sense rogue behaviour in a trusted resource or anticipate that they may be a candidate threat'. As such it is deemed necessary 'that we presume any insider could conduct unauthorized or rogue activities'. Consequently, the movement of human beings, each and every possible human disposition and expression, of each and every human individual subject to liberal governance, is becoming the object of strategies for critical infrastructure protection. In this context any action or thought that borders on abnormality is likely to be targeted as a potential source of threat. As the Plan states, 'the same anticipation of overt damaging action by a purposeful threat can be used to anticipate an unfortunate excursion in thought or action by a well-meaning actor'.

It also runs the risk, and indeed fulfils the risk of the violent destruction of human life, populations and individuals, who for no fault of their own, are deemed to exhibit signs of anomalous and threatening behaviour. In the wake of September 11, a shoot-to-kill policy, named Operation Kratos, was adopted by British police with a view to preventing similar suicide attacks occurring in the United Kingdom. This policy failed, however, to prevent the attacks on the transport infrastructure of the United Kingdom which took place on July 7, 2005, leading only to the deliberate murder of an innocent, Jean Charles de Menezes, killed

with five gunshots to the head fired at point blank range by British police on July 22, 2005. This human being described as 'unidentified male' with 'dark hair beard/stubble' was targeted on account of the fact that his 'description and demeanour' 'matched the identity of a bomber suspect'. The simple fact of his leaving an apartment block thought to have been used by terrorist suspects, the simple fact that on his subsequent journey, he exited and re-entered the bus on which he travelled, and in spite of the facts that he walked did not run, showed no sign of possessing weapons of destruction, gave no signal of intent of any sort, was deemed, nevertheless, to represent a divergence from a normal pattern of behaviour so serious that his life was targeted with deliberate violence, and destroyed. In spite of the scale and intensity with which the aim of a complete mapping of human dispositions and behaviours has been pursued, and in spite of the urgency with which today it is being implemented, the most banal and everyday expressions of life continue to fall, sometimes tragically, outside its grasp.

The development of a 'common operating picture' involves creating sensor systems which will pervade critical infrastructures in their entirety, encompassing the tracking and targeting of human dispositions and actions intensively and extensively. The fundamental principle on which critical infrastructure protection depends is, as we are told, that 'anyone can be presumed to be a candidate for insider threat'. And yet, in its application, critical infrastructure protection functions through a range of techniques of discrimination by which individual candidates for insider threat are distinguished from one another. 'The physical and virtual doorways' into critical infrastructure are of central importance in the War on Terror and their adequate protection is deemed to require the development of new methods of portal security. Portal security, in the contemporary world, it is said, 'will require robust and predictable operations under a variety of environmental conditions that provide identification and authentication of the people, materials, and information that pass through them'. 'Identification', in this context of portal security, 'refers to the process of recognizing an individual or object from a known population'. Successful identification depends on a 'system's ability to recognize a person or object by comparing a measurement, or multiple measurements, with a previously acquired record in a database'. It depends, methodologically, on what is called a 'one-to-many comparison since the measured identifier must be compared to some or all of the records in the database to determine potential membership within the population.

The measurements by which identification is established are fundamentally dependent on modes of discrimination exercised at the level of the biological life of individuals and populations. They can involve the discernment of specificities of human gait, the distinctiveness of a written signature, or the input of keyboard strokes onto a computer. Physical measurements include 'fingerprints, hand and finger geometry, facial features, vasculature structure of the retina, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), and speech characteristics'. These are what are known now in the technical literatures on critical infrastructure as 'biometric identifiers'. Research and development in the field of 'biometrics' has increased exponentially since 2001. A powerful biometrics industry has grown out of renewed government investment in the abilities of private companies to develop the technologies with which to identify terrorists on the basis of their biological signifiers, and protect critical infrastructures from intrusion and subversion accordingly. A central feature of claims made



as to the abilities of these technologies to provide security to critical infrastructure has been the stress placed on their capacities to identify individuals on the basis, for example, of their facial characteristics. In the wake of September 11, the Visionics corporation, a major player in the biometrics market, published a white paper titled 'Protecting Civilization from the Faces of Terror: A Primer on the Role Facial Recognition Technology Can Play in Enhancing Airport Security'. As the paper argues 'terror is not faceless' and through the development of 'databases of terrorist faces' the threat of terrorism can be tracked and prevented.

The assumptions on which such biometric techniques of facial recognition as a means of identification are based are vast. As Kelly Gates has described, such techniques are based on the epistemological hubris that 'the dynamic nature of the face – its expressive capacity, its transformation over time, and especially its radical variability across populations' is merely a 'technical hurdle' which can be surmounted 'in the process of transforming faces into stable, mobile, and combinable information'. In turn the measurement of the risks posed by particular candidates for insider threat, significantly on the basis of whether or not individuals share facial characteristics with the populations constructed on databases, means that identification depends on the representation of a face within a racially encoded visual field. While in the abstract 'anyone can be presumed to be a candidate for insider threat', the application of facial recognition techniques and their use in combination with 'databases of terrorist faces' means that individuals are targeted on the basis of their visual appearance decoded in racialised terms. To belong to a particular population distinguishable within a visual field of representation as of higher risk than other populations, is to be distinguished as a more dangerous individual than other individuals.

The murder of De Menezes demonstrates the arbitrariness and dangers inherent in this practice of using racial criteria to determine the risks posed by particular individuals. De Menezes was, as is now well known, a Brazilian. Joseph Pugliese has coined the term 'racialised phenotypology' to describe the techniques through which De Menezes was targeted. 'De Menezes' phenotypical features – his olive skin, his black hair and bushy eyebrows' were 'transmuted into the stereotypical signifiers of the Orientalist figure of the terrorist: a Brazilian thereby morph(ed), fatally, into an Asian'. The same racialised techniques of discrimination are now being applied to target specific populations in the development of new security apparatuses, biometrically enhanced means of control and surveillance, by liberal regimes globally, particularly the UK. The presumption that the task of security requires the discerning of differences between forms of life on the basis of their relative approximation to the rogues of the species, remains today, as it was in the eighteenth century, the definitive feature of the strategies underpinning the development of the liberal way of war. And yet today, in the context of the War on Terror, the practice of roguing has become disseminated to a degree that each and every human being, as well as each and every living thing, is participant in this conflict of the species with its rogues. In turn the racialised categories through which the human species was originally conceived by liberal thinkers and practitioners of the eighteenth century remain vividly present in the conduct of this conflict. Kant's depiction of a human species, essentially universal, but tragically riven by the evolutionary struggle between a European elect and its Negrid, and Mongolid deviants remains the framework in which liberal strategists of the present conceive the struggles of the day. And like Darwin's seed-raisers and animal-breeders, liberal strategists

continue to proceed on the understanding that with the supremacy of their own race secured, they may persevere by merely surveying and extracting those rogues which deviate from the proper standards of humanity, 'for', as Darwin claimed 'hardly any one is so careless as to allow his worst animals to breed'.

Foucault's political aims in *Security, Territory, Population*, as throughout much of his work, are stated in rather modest terms. He claims to seek not to bear judgement on the rightness versus wrongness of liberal arts of government, merely to document the reasoning on which they rest, the assumptions they make, as well as the collateral effects they entail. He warns, indeed, against the dangers of what he terms in the very first lecture, pursuing a 'polemic' against liberalism. The lectures entail a direct critique of socialism for its failures to offer a distinct account of government outside to that of liberalism. In this sense these lectures might be understood as complicit with the advance of the liberal arts of government they otherwise document. For those of us actively interested in and seeking the possibility of an account of life with which to contest the global expansion of liberal governmentality, these lectures therefore entail their limits. In the development of the early era of 'Foucault studies' within the Anglophone world those limits were deemed to be necessary and indeed valuable in themselves. Colin Gordon, in an introductory and seminal essay of 1991 titled 'Governmental Rationality', described Foucault's 'intrigue', 'respect', even 'admiration' for liberal arts of government as a source of historical effectiveness for resistance to the expansionist and despotic tendencies of the modern state. And true enough one might see that intrigue, respect and admiration testified to in the development of the ethics of subjectivity which was a major aspect of his late works.

However I think such a deduction of the utility of Foucault's works for the political critique of liberalism is while possible, fundamentally unnecessary and indeed, undesirable. For the lectures, as well as Foucault's works on liberal government as a whole, are invaluable in so far as they allow us to identify what forms of life it is that liberal arts of government, in their veneration of specific freedoms of circulation and exchange, denigrate and legitimise the extinction of. In doing so they invite us to not only recognise the metaphysical imperium on which the liberal account of life depends, but also to venture beyond that analytical threshold and proclaim the ontological superiority and possibility of illiberal modes of living. Likewise they may and indeed ought to be read, I argue, as a generative of a commitment to the defence of those alternatives as they exist in their various forms of historical constitution as well as the active instigation of their political potentiality. Of course this is precisely what Foucault thought he was doing when he travelled to and reported from Iran in 1978, shortly after giving these lectures. 'The first insurrection against global systems' he called the Iranian Revolution.

In that sense I believe that we can best use these lectures today to sustain not just our ethical but our political imaginations, with a view to continuing to pursue the possibility of such a collective process of transformation, in excess of the limits of liberal governance. Traditional proponents of 'governmentality studies' will no doubt want to insist that to do so is to be unfaithful to Foucault's own explicit statements as to the purposes of his lectures on security and liberal governance. But then we all know as any good political theorist or indeed scientist can tell us, that what people say and what people do, are two very different

practices. And even were we to recognise the sanctity of Foucault's insistences on this subject, we would be left with the as fundamental problem of the relation between law and fidelity. Does one do justice to a theorist, most especially Foucault, by simply following them? By being led and conducted by them? I defy any reader of Foucault, especially of these lectures, to draw such a conclusion.